

# Union Calendar No. 142

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 4706

[Report No. 117-198]

To establish the Blackwell School National Historic Site in Marfa, Texas,  
and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 27, 2021

Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas (for himself and Mr. VELA) introduced the  
following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

DECEMBER 1, 2021

Reported from the Committee on Natural Resources; committed to the Com-  
mittee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be  
printed

# A BILL

To establish the Blackwell School National Historic Site in  
Marfa, Texas, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2   *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3   **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Blackwell School Na-  
5   tional Historic Site Act”.

6   **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7       In this Act:

8              (1) NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE.—The term “na-  
9   tional historic site” means the Blackwell School, in  
10   Marfa, Texas.

11             (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
12   the Secretary of the Interior.

13   **SEC. 3. FINDINGS.**

14       Congress finds as follows:

15             (1) The Blackwell School, located at 501 South  
16   Abbott Street, in Marfa, Presidio County, Texas, is  
17   associated with the period of racial segregation in  
18   Marfa public schools and is the sole extant property  
19   directly associated with Hispanic education in the  
20   community, the remaining buildings having been  
21   torn down after the school closed in 1965.

22             (2) The Blackwell School is a tangible reminder  
23   of a time when the practice of “separate but equal”  
24   dominated education and social systems. Despite  
25   being categorized as “white” by Texas law, Mexican

1       Americans were regularly excluded from commin-  
2       gling with Anglos at barbershops, restaurants, fu-  
3       neral homes, theaters, churches, and schools.

4               (3) The spectrum of experiences of students  
5       and teachers at the Blackwell School constitute an  
6       important record of life in a segregated school in the  
7       context of the history of Texas and America.

8               (4) Mexican and Mexican American culture and  
9       history in Marfa is tied to the Blackwell School,  
10      which for more than 50 years served as a leading  
11      feature of the Hispanic community, illustrating the  
12      challenge of maintaining cultural identity in a domi-  
13      nant Anglo society. Yet today, Hispanic influences  
14      are seen in Marfa's social and religious organiza-  
15      tions, business and government institutions, and  
16      shared experiences of language, food, and music.

17               (5) The historic Blackwell School building is a  
18      physical record of the longevity and beauty of the  
19      distinctive design and craftsmanship informed by  
20      both traditional techniques and materials, and the  
21      transition from purely the vernacular to the period  
22      of materials, design, and workmanship made avail-  
23      able after the arrival of the railroad. The original  
24      historic school building and grounds on which it

1 stands provide an authentic setting to commemorate  
2 and interpret the history of the Blackwell School.

3 (6) The Blackwell School is closely associated  
4 with the broad patterns of local, State, and national  
5 history in the area of school segregation. Mexicans  
6 and other members of the Latin American diaspora  
7 have placed a high value upon education as a means  
8 of economic, social, and political advancement.

9 (7) Mexican Americans and other members of  
10 the Latin American diaspora have placed a high  
11 value upon education as a means of economic, social,  
12 and political advancement. However, Hispanics and  
13 Latinos have not always had equitable opportunities  
14 and access to quality educational facilities in the  
15 United States.

16 **SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BLACKWELL SCHOOL NA-**  
17 **TIONAL HISTORIC SITE.**

18 (a) **ESTABLISHMENT.—**

19 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to paragraph (2),  
20 there is established the Blackwell School National  
21 Historic Site in the State of Texas as a unit of the  
22 National Park System to preserve, protect and inter-  
23 pret for the benefit of present and future genera-  
24 tions the Blackwell School, its role as both an aca-  
25 demic and cultural cornerstone in the community in

1       Marfa, Texas, and its function within a segregated  
2       system of education in Texas and the United States  
3       from 1885 through 1965.

4               (2) CONDITIONS.—The national historic site  
5       shall not be established until the date on which the  
6       Secretary has—

7                       (A) entered into a written agreement with  
8       the Marfa Unified School District providing  
9       that the Blackwell School shall be donated to or  
10      placed by agreement into co-management with  
11      the United States for inclusion in a national  
12      historic site to be managed consistently with the  
13      purposes of a national historic site; and

14                       (B) acquired sufficient land or interests in  
15      land within the boundaries of the national his-  
16      toric site to constitute a manageable unit.

17               (b) BOUNDARIES.—The boundaries of the national  
18      historic site shall be the boundaries generally depicted on  
19      the map.

20               (c) AVAILABILITY OF MAP.—The map shall be on file  
21      and available for public inspection in the appropriate of-  
22      fices of the National Park Service.

23               (d) ACQUISITION OF AUTHORITY.—The Secretary  
24      may only acquire any land or interest in land located with-  
25      in the boundary of the national historic site by—

- 1                             (1) donation;
- 2                             (2) purchase with donated funds; or
- 3                             (3) exchange.

4                             (e) ADMINISTRATION.—

5                             (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall admin-  
6                             ister this national historic site in accordance with—  
7                                 (A) this Act; and  
8                                 (B) the laws generally applicable to units  
9                             of the National Park System.

10                            (2) MANAGEMENT PLAN.—

11                            (A) Not later than 3 years after the date  
12                             on which funds are first made available to the  
13                             Secretary for this purpose, the Secretary shall  
14                             prepare a general management plan for the na-  
15                             tional historic site in accordance with section  
16                             100502 of title 54, United States Code.

17                            (B) Upon completion, the Secretary shall  
18                             submit the general management plan prepared  
19                             pursuant to subparagraph (A) to the Com-  
20                             mittee on Natural Resources of the House of  
21                             Representatives and the Committee on Energy  
22                             and Natural Resources of the Senate.

23                            (f) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary  
24                             shall enter into cooperative agreements with the Blackwell  
25                             School Alliance (and other local, regional, State, academic

1 and nonprofit partners) for interpretive and educational  
2 programming, technical assistance, and rehabilitation re-  
3 lated to the national historic site.

4 (g) WRITTEN CONSENT OF OWNER.—No private  
5 property or non-Federal public property shall be included  
6 within the boundaries of the national historic site or man-  
7 aged as part of the national historic site without the writ-  
8 ten consent of the owner of such property.



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